

Louisiana State University LSU Digital Commons

LSU Master's Theses

Graduate School

2017

Gender Beyond Birth: Gender Non-Conforming Students Lived Experiences Residing On-Campus in the Southeast

Tiffany Marlene Shierling

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, tiffanymarlene@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Shierling, Tiffany Marlene, "Gender Beyond Birth: Gender Non-Conforming Students Lived Experiences Residing On-Campus in the Southeast" (2017). *LSU Master's Theses*. 4535.

https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses/4535

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Master's Theses by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.

GENDER BEYOND BIRTH: THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF GENDER NON-
CONFORMING STUDENTS RESIDING ON CAMPUS IN THE SOUTHEAST.

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical University College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts

in

The Department of Education

by
Tiffany M. Shierling
B.S., Florida Atlantic University, 2015
May 2017

©Copyright Tiffany Shierling
All rights reserved

Acknowledgements

There are a few people that need to be acknowledged because of their support of me in the process of writing this. Most importantly, I would like to remember the gender non-conforming people we have lost.

Participants: Thank you for sharing your stories with me. You are all amazing people and I will appreciate you forever.

Mom, Tyler and Eric: Thank you for pushing me to do this and being the best parents and brother I could ask for. You are the reason I was able to finish this.

April: Thank you for being you, you are my best friend and will be forever. You have made my life so much better and I hope that writing this is making the world a better place for your children.

Tori: Thank you for pushing me to be better. You are someone I have looked up to since we met. I appreciate you pushing me to do better and be better.

Kaley and Jenn: Thank you for always telling me that I could do this. You two have been constantly reminding of my ability to succeed, and I love you for it.

Dr. Alsandor: Thank you for pushing me to do this, and telling me that I can. Thank you for continuing to support me after you left LSU.

Dr. Blanchard: Thank you for dealing with my rough rough drafts and being understanding with me. I appreciate you pushing me to write better.

Dr. Curry & Dr. Csaszar: Thank you for being you. You both are amazing and I am so happy that I had the chance to meet you both.

To my Miller Mansion RA Staff: Your encouragement throughout the year was more than I ever asked for, I am so lucky to have supervised you all and cannot wait to see where life takes you.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Acknowledgements..... | iii |
| Abstract..... | v |
| Chapter 1: Introduction..... | 1 |
| Chapter 2: Review of Literature..... | 12 |
| Chapter 3: Methodology..... | 25 |
| Chapter 4: Findings | 30 |
| Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications and Recommendations..... | 47 |
| References..... | 53 |
| Appendix A: IRB Approval and Continuation..... | 56 |
| Appendix B: Recruitment Email..... | 59 |
| Appendix C: Consent Form..... | 60 |
| Appendix D: Sample Survey..... | 62 |
| Vita..... | 66 |

Abstract

In this study, using a qualitative approach, gender non-conforming students lived experience living on campus in the south is being investigated. “Trans* students remain largely invisible through college records as no data is collected consistently on their enrollment” (Nicolazzo, 2016 p. 539). Although this is true of all gender non-conforming students, it is even more relevant to those that attend universities in the Southeast. Gender non-conforming students are attending universities in higher numbers than every reported before and yet, student affairs still does not have a theory that relates to these students when teaching their graduate students. The psychological literature does not yet contain identity development models for each identity that falls under the rubric transgender, but models of transsexual and butch lesbian identity development have been put forth” (Levitt, H.M., Ippolito, M.R., 2014 p. 1929). Thus, this research recommends how to help these students using Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model of Human Development.

Chapter 1: Introduction

There is a dearth of research concerning gender non-conforming students. Specifically, there is not much in regard to gender non-conforming students who live on campus. “*Trans* students remain largely invisible through college records as no data is collected consistently on their enrollment*” (Nicolazzo, 2016, pg. 539). These students face numerous issues that often go unaddressed such as admissions paperwork, bathrooms, organizations and access to health care. For example, most campuses have gender segregated bathrooms as well as activities (Nicolazzo, 2016, pg. 540). These gender segregated areas make it harder for gender non-conforming students to feel safe to use the restroom or get involved on campus.

Another issue that these students face is that they often do not feel safe on campus. Some of the students are coming from families that do not support their identities; therefore, when they begin the college process they are either not able to identify the way they feel comfortable or they no longer have familial support. Student affairs professionals who will be interacting with these students have a duty to provide them with the support they need to be successful within the university.

Statement of the Problem

With the growing amount of gender non-conforming students attending colleges and universities, there needs to be more of a focus on the services provided them. I find it important to study the experiences of these students to ensure that as a profession, student affairs administrators are providing gender non-conforming students with the services they need to be successful throughout their college career.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to learn about the lived experiences of gender non-conforming students who attend four-year institutions in the Southeast and reside on campus. Within this study, I investigated their experiences at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs). For the purpose of this study, I utilized an experiential lens to understand and analyze the experiences of the participants and how that has affected their college career.

Research Questions and Design

There are many different ways to frame this study, I have chosen to use Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Developmental Ecological Systems theory. The questions that guided this study are as follows:

1. What are the lived experiences of gender non-conforming student in the Southeast?
2. Are accommodations for room selection processes and on campus living options adequate?
3. Have the students observed a change in campus culture within their time at their university?

While using the qualitative method, in-depth interviews, I was able to gain a deep understanding of these students and how their experience were shaped. "The environmental events that are the most immediate and potent in affecting a person's development are activities that are engaged in by others with that person or in their presence" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 6). With this study, I did not seek a theory that explained the outcomes, because I felt that the outcomes were due to the process or environmental events that each student went through. I choose this theory to explain the process each student went through and how that affected their outcomes.

Bronfenbrenner's Developmental Ecological Systems theory "requires a reorientation of the conventional view of the proper relation between science and public policy"

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 8). Through this theory, we are able to learn about multiple facets of the students' development and how each participants process affected their outcomes.

Here the emphasis is not on the traditional psychological processes of perception, motivation, thinking and learning, but on their content– what is perceived, desired, feared, thought about, or acquired as knowledge, and how the nature of this psychological material changes as a function of a person's exposure to and interaction with the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 9).

Using this theory, student affairs educators should be able to begin to understand the processes that gender non-conforming students go through and therefore be able to provide these students with the services they need to be successful.

Process

Process is the main component of the Developmental Ecological systems model. "The ecology of human development lies at a point of convergence among the disciplines of the biological, psychological and social sciences as they bear on the evolution of an individual in society" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 13). The process should develop along with the individual. As the individual grows the process should become more and more intricate and complex. This allows the individual to develop more throughout the process without challenging them too much.

Person

Bronfenbrenner stated that a person's attributes are what are to likely shape their development. "The developing person is viewed not merely as a tabula rasa on which the environment makes its impact, but as a growing dynamic entity that progressively moves into and restructures the milieu in which it resides" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 21). The process and

development is different for each student. The same attribute that is positive for one student might be negative for another. Their attributes are termed developmentally instigated characteristics and there are four different types. The four types are Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem and Macrosystem.

“Since the environment also exerts its influence, requiring a process of mutual accommodations, the interaction between person and environment is viewed as two directional that is, characterized by reciprocity” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). Some of the students who participated in this study will have joined multiple student organizations as a way to react to their surroundings while others depended solely on themselves and did not join any groups. This affects the way that their development happens and the rest of the process that they go through.

“The environment defined as relevant to developmental processes is not limited to a single, immediate setting but is extended to incorporate interconnections between such settings, as well as to external influences emanating from the larger surrounding” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). Persistence is an important part of the process for any college student, but for gender non-conforming students it is even more important because they will face many more challenges due to their gender identities.

Context

Microsystem. There are many different aspects of the college experience that affect the environment that a student is developing in. “A microsystem is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, pg. 22). The microsystem is made up of a person’s family, doctors, peers from school, group affiliations, and religious institutions.

These groups and people have direct contact with the developing person. Moreover, this direct relationship affects how a person views him or herself, and how he or she presents a public self.

Mesosystem. Adding another layer to the ecological development circle, is the mesosystem. “A mesosystem comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, pg. 25). The mesosystem involves the interaction of two or more microsystems. An example of a mesosystem is a person’s family interacting with her peers from school. Further, this interaction might impact how that student functions at school. This piece of the theory focuses on how the inner circles interact together to impact an individual’s identity.

Exosystem. On the outside of the mesosystem is the exosystem. “An exosystem refers to one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, pg. 25). The exosystem is comprised of policies and processes that support, or create barriers, to the developing person. For example, a board of education, board of supervisors, Academic Affairs, or other groups that create policies that indirectly impact the individual. These entities, though not directly related to the individual, have decision making power that greatly affects how the individual develops.

Macrosystem. The last circle is that of a macrosystem and it encompasses all of the other circles. “Macrosystem refers to consistencies, in the form and content of lower-order systems (micro-, meso-, exo-) that exist, or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, pg. 26). The macrosystem includes cultural norms that society subscribes

to. The ideology and popular belief of what a society is prescribed to and how that affects the individual.

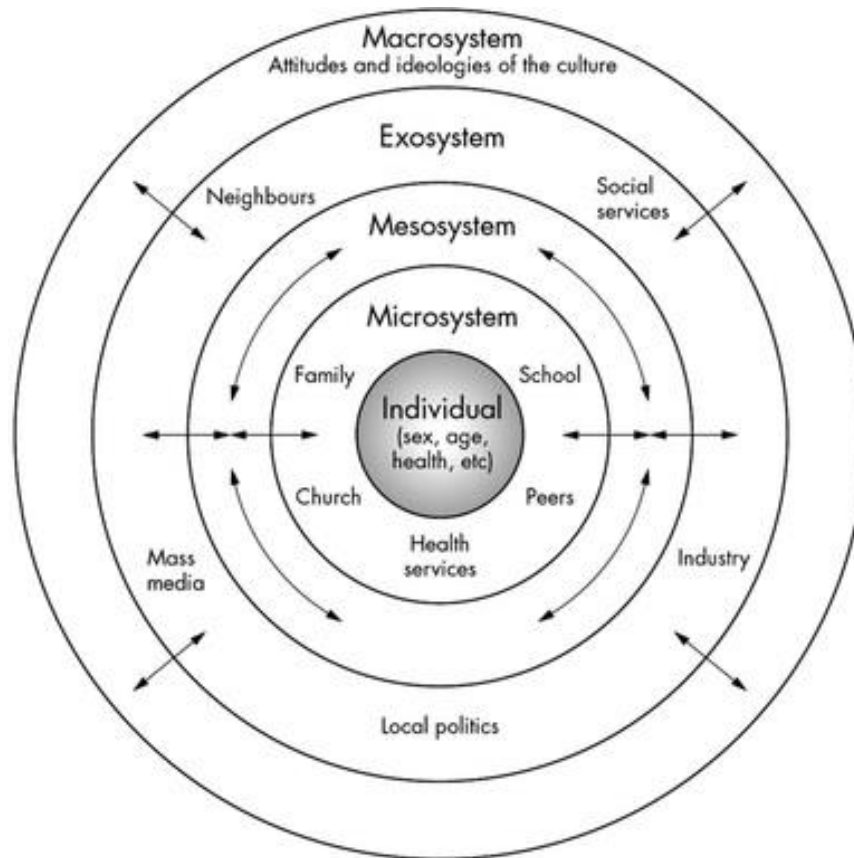


Figure 1.1 Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Significance

I saw there to be significance in this study because there of the dearth of scholarship on gender non-conforming students living on campuses in the southeast. Although there is some research exists about these students living on campuses in the Northeast, along with a few articles about the West and Midwest, I find the location of the Southeast compelling. The Southeast is a conservative area, that values religious institutions and their teachings more than anything else, and from my experience, those affiliated with the institutions are thought to be

against the idea that a student does not conform to the gender binary. The idea that these affiliates do not support all of the students may mean that the benefactors for the universities also do not support these students. If the individuals who are giving the university money do not support a certain demographic of students, it may be harder to support these students with services.

Being that the Southeast is a conservative area, there are students who attend the universities in the South that have never been in contact with a gender non-conforming student. There are also many staff members who work for the university who have not been trained to work with these students. Beyond just the higher education professionals within the universities there are many students and staff employed. To fully support this population of students, there needs to be more focus on what they need and how to provide meaningful professional development on these topics. My main goal is to educate people on how we might support gender non-conforming students and possibly make their on-campus university experience better.

There is research that exists under the acronym LGBT. LGBT translates to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. The issue that I see with this being one type of literature, is that Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual are all sexual orientations and Transgender is a gender orientation. The students who identify as Transgender will go through much different developmental issues than students who identify as Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual. It should be understood that a person who is Transgender can identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Definition of Key Terms

There are many terms that need to be defined for someone to understand this study. When working with gender non-conforming students it is helpful to understand the words that these

students use amongst each other and within their interviews. I will also be defining words that are used in the literature. There are a few terms that related to residential life and on campus housing that I will also be defining. *All of the following definitions were obtained from google.*

Bisexual: a person who is romantically or sexually attracted to people of various gender identities; ambisexual.

Cis-Gendered: a person who is romantically or sexually attracted to both men and women, or to people of various gender identities; ambisexual.

Dead name: the act of referring to a transgender person's birth name instead of their chosen name.

Female: of or denoting the sex that can bear offspring or produce eggs, distinguished biologically by the production of gametes (ova) that can be fertilized by male gametes.

FTM: noting or relating to a person who was born female but whose gender identity and gender expression is male.

Gate Keeper: term used in social analysis to refer to persons who are able to arbitrate access to a social role, field setting or structure.

Gay: of, relating to, or exhibiting sexual desire or behavior directed toward a person or persons of one's own sex; homosexual.

Gender Neutral Housing: gender-neutral housing assignments refer to a housing option in which two or more students mutually agree to share a multiple-occupancy bedroom, suite, or apartment without regard to the gender of the occupants.

Gender Inclusive Housing: a housing option in which two or more students share a multiple occupancy apartment or suite regardless of students' sex, gender identity or gender expression. In

other words, this option allows for same gender or other gender identities to live together regardless of biological sex.

Gender Non-Conforming: denoting or relating to a person whose behavior or appearance does not conform to prevailing cultural and social expectations about what is appropriate to their gender.

Gender Queer: a person who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of male and female genders.

Gender Segregated: the separation of people according to social constructions of gender.

Genderism: or gender binarism, is the social system or cultural belief that gender is a binary: that is, that there are, or should be, only two genders—masculine and feminine—with the aspects of one's gender inherently linked to one's genetic sex, or sex assigned at birth.

Graduate Residence Director: A Graduate Residence Director is a live-in graduate student staff member in the Department of Residential Life who is responsible for the co-administration of a living community.

Lesbian: a homosexual woman.

Male: of or denoting the sex that produces small, typically motile gametes, especially spermatozoa, with which a female may be fertilized or inseminated to produce offspring.

Micro-aggressions: a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority.

MTF: denoting or relating to a person who is born male and subsequently adopts the identity or appearance of a female, especially one who has undergone gender reassignment.

Outing/Getting Outed: the act or practice of revealing the homosexuality of a person.

Phenomenological Research: The focus of phenomenological inquiry is what people experience in regard to some phenomenon or other and how they interpret those experiences.

Predominantly White Institution (PWI): term used to describe institutions of higher learning in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment.

Pronouns: used as replacements or substitutes for nouns and noun phrases and that have very general reference, as I, you, he, this, who, what.

Qualitative Research: Qualitative Research is primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research.

Residence Life Coordinator: A Residence Life Coordinator is a professional live-in staff member in the Department of Residential Life who is responsible for the quality of living in a university residence hall or group of halls.

Resiliency: the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

Safety: protected from or not exposed to danger or risk; not likely to be harmed or lost.

Student Affairs Professional/Educator: Student affairs, student support, or student services is the department or division of services and support for students at institutions of higher education to enhance student growth and development in the United States and abroad.

They/Them: Singular they is the use in English of the pronoun they or its inflected or derivative forms, them, their, theirs, and themselves (or themselves), as a gender-neutral singular pronoun.

Trans*: an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the gender identity spectrum.

Transfeminine: a term used to describe transgender people who were assigned male at birth, but identify with femininity to a greater extent than with masculinity.

Transgender: denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth sex.

Transman: a transgender person who was assigned female at birth but whose gender identity is that of a man.

Transmasculine: a term used to describe transgender people who were assigned female at birth, but identify with masculinity to a greater extent than with femininity. This includes: Trans men and Demiguys. Multigender people whose strongest gender identity is a masculine one.

Transwoman: a woman who was assigned male at birth.

Subjectivity Statement

It is important to understand my personal identity and how it affected my research. I am a cis-gender female who identifies as a lesbian. My best friend from high school is a transman, someone who thought they couldn't go to college because of their identity. Throughout my college experience I have had the privilege of meeting many other gender non-conforming students. Each of these students have had a different experience and had varying support.

As someone who doesn't personally identify as gender non-conforming I am an outsider to those whom I am interviewing. My identity has made it slightly easier to connect with my subjects, but it does not help me fully connect with them. I worked with each subject to connect on a personal level and be able to attain as much information as possible.

Concluding Thoughts

As detailed in previous sections, this study is based on interviews with gender non-conforming students that have or are living on a campus in the South. I will utilize Bronfenbrenner's Developmental Ecological theory to help understand the development of these students and their experience.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

For the purposes of this study I explored the living experiences of gender non-conforming students who reside on campus in the South. There is a dearth of scholarship that discusses the on campus living experiences of gender non-conforming students. The little research that does mention it only lightly focuses on the living experience instead of the on-campus experience or classroom experience. Furthermore, there is little to no research on the experience of gender non-conforming students in the South.

This review contains literature that focuses on the development of gender non-conforming students and their experiences on college and university campuses. Also included are articles that interpret actions that are seen as acting against gender non-conforming students that have happened in recent years at universities across the southeastern United States.

Gender

In the United States, there are people who do not conform to socially prescribed gender roles. In essence, those people who don't conform to the characteristics and roles that are expected of the sex they were assigned at birth (Toomey, Ryan, Daiz, Card, & Russell, 2010) experience many different adverse effects in their life. When a person lives in a culture that engrains gender roles as soon as they are born, their chances of being victimized when they do not conform to those gender roles are much higher. Examples of this victimization include being harassed because of the way they look, being denied entry into places and being physically assaulted.

Due to their non-conforming gender, students who identify under the gender non-conforming umbrella are often thought to need intense counseling. One research study shows that "transgender friends were also seen as providing needed counseling that was unavailable

from the traditional health care system” (Galupo, Bauerband, Gonzalez, Hagen, Hether, & Krum, 2014 p. 194). Likeness does not always equal helpfulness and friendship but literature takes the stance that LGBT friendships are held together with an understanding of inequalities that exist across their identity. (Galupo et al, 2014). It is the differences that help LGBT individuals be better friends to each other.

When cis-gender students arrive at a university, they are more worried about if they are going to get along with their roommate rather than what bathroom they are going to be able to use safely. Gender-segregated facilities on campus are ones that gender non-conforming students find problematic to navigate. These areas include bathrooms, locker rooms and residential hall spaces. (Krum, Davis, & Gulupo, 2013). These students are already navigating their gender identity, and as soon as they arrive at college they are also burdened with how to safely navigate facilities.

Gender non-conforming people lack appropriate models of gender development that encapsulates nontraditional development of gender. When these people are developing, there is a lack of resources to help them understand what they are going through. “The psychological literature does not yet contain identity development models for each identity that falls under the rubric transgender, but models of transsexual and butch lesbian identity development have been put forth” (Levitt, Ippolito, 2014 p. 1929). The closest type of identity development put forth, has been that of a term that is no longer appropriate to use, transsexual, as well as an identity that is related to sexual orientation and not gender identity, butch lesbian identity. There is a lack of research on the gender identity development of gender non-conforming people, specifically gender non-conforming students.

Gender non-conforming students are more likely to enter college having had experience with abuse.

Children in the U.S. whose activity choices, interest, and pretend play before age 11 fall outside those typically expressed by their biological sex face increased risk of being physically, psychologically and sexually abused and of suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder(PTSD) by early adulthood, according to a new study led by researchers at Harvard School of Public Health (Datz, 2012, p. 2).

In layman's terms, students who are gender non-conforming are more likely to enter colleges already suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Administrators need to be aware of the issues that gender-nonconforming students are facing when working with them.

There are different thoughts about gender and how it is defined. Many of these are social theories that are not widely known. According to postmodern queer theory, gender is fluid and dynamic, mainstream society defines gender as two separate entities, male and female. (Case, Kanenberg, Erich, & Tittsworth, 2012). For gender non-conforming students, gender is fluid and dynamic, and it is not something that has two choices and then done. "Transgender persons living outside the confines of traditional constructed gender binary are not eligible for the benefits associated with gender conforming people" (Case et al, 2012, p. 147). The privilege that cis-gender or gender conforming students can access is not available for those students who do not confirm to the gender roles. This privilege that gender nonconforming students do not access include the ability to use a bathroom without having to think about someone hurting you.

By challenging the gender binary, students are challenging heteronormativity. "As heteronormativity requires men to ignore other men's bodies, heterosexual men do masculinity and simultaneously uphold their heterosexuality, by ignoring the bodily details or transmen's transition" (Schilt, Westbrook, 2009, p. 451). Society teaches men to ignore the experience of transmen and transwomen, and if they do not then their heterosexuality is on the line.

Transgender people, like all people, have what is referred to as cultural genitalia, and this is assigned to them by how they present their gender (Schilt et. al, 2009). Gender is a social construct, and when someone assumes something about another person because of their presentation, this is where some of the issues that gender non-conforming students face.

College Experience

The experiences for gender non-conforming students on college campuses are often riddled with gender binary experiences. College campuses are likely to impose systems that follow the gender binary on their students, such systems include but are not limited to, residential halls, restrooms and recreational facilities (Pryor, 2015). There are many different places on college campuses where gender non-conforming students are having to navigate, mostly alone, where they are safe to be. “Peer groups have been shown to have positive and negative influences on students’ persistence decisions” (Pryor, 2015, p. 441). When these students have peers that support them, it will have a positive influence on them, but it could also have negative influences. There is not just one way that peers influence each other.

When faculty supports students, they are more likely to succeed, this is even more important regarding gender non-conforming students. After peer groups, faculty have a significant effect on how a student develops, these faculty members also have a power that can help them foster a space of support and inclusion (Pryor, 2015). Faculty and administrators have a level of power that gives them the ability to make spaces inclusive and supportive. The classroom, like many venues on campus, is an area of vulnerability for gender non-conforming students, because they are likely to be misgendered in that space (Pryor, 2015). If a faculty member is able to ease these concerns by being inclusive and supportive then they might effectively create a better experience for their students. These staff members are also able to

suggest involvement on campus. “Opportunities of involvement, particularly for transgender students, have been connected to growth along with identity processes but most particularly toward the creation of social support” (Pryor, 2015, pg. 441). When a gender non-conforming student is able to get involved-on campus, they are able to get the social support that gender non-conforming students are more likely to lack.

Throughout college, gender non-conforming students have an unsaid responsibility to educate those people who are not like them. A person who is cisgender is likely to have their negative attitudes changed through learning (Pryor, 2015). With this, cisgender students are able to become more understanding. Not all students’ attitudes are going to change through education about gender non-conforming. This is especially true within the classroom. “It was easier to be out in some classes than others, and once she began taking small discussion-based courses it was easier to express herself. She said ‘I want to be [out] I want show my experience and for people to understand that’” (Pryor, 2015, pg. 447). This experience of a transwoman, is one that many gender non-conforming students will go through. Some of these students will never come out in their classes, which usually will affect their grades because these students will resort to not talking during classes, which makes them seem non-participatory in class, when in all reality, they are practicing self-preservation. (Nicolazzo, 2017, pg. 77).

Although not all students will be “out” in the classroom, there is an unknown obligation that is associated with being out. When a student comes out in a classroom as gender non-conforming, society places pressure on them to perform gender in a manner that is considered correct (Pryor, 2015). This creates another problem for gender non-conforming students, because some of these students that identify as gender non-conforming do not conform to the gender

binary, so they are not able to “perform gender correctly”. Consequently, if they do not perform gender correctly, they are ostracized.

On college campuses, there are health centers that are supposed to be there for the convenience of every student that attends the university. Colleges and university health centers rarely meet the basic health care needs of gender non-conforming students (Beemyn, 2005). These on campus health centers are not likely to have any type of hormone therapy or be trained on gender non-conforming issues. Likewise, campus health centers are less likely to have the training that would allow them to be helpful to the gender non-conforming community. (Beemyn, 2005). These professionals are not trained to speak to talk to students who are gender non-conforming. They may make these students feel uncomfortable or offend them without this training.

Students who enter a university and are gender non-conforming likely go by a different name than what their parents gave them at birth. This might cause problems within the university, and most universities will not allow students to change their names on official records. Gender non-conforming students may find it important to be able to alter their records and documents (Beemyn, 2005). By being able to change names on legal documents within the university, gender non-conforming students have more protection. Beemyn (2005) explained, “Not only does having the appropriate name and gender listed reflect and validate their identity but it also protects the students from constantly having to explain why they use a name different from their birth name and why their appearance does not match a photo or gender designated on an identification” (pg. 83). On most campuses, a student needs their identification card for access to multiple buildings as well as perks of being a university student. If a gender non-conforming student does not have their proper name, or gender designation, it can cause stress on

that student as well as they will likely not want to participate in these events or living on campus due to these issues.

When thinking of gender non-conforming students there is not just one picture that might come to mind. “Transgender student may be of any age, ethnicity, race, class or sexual orientation” (Beemyn, Curtis, Masen, & Tubbs, 2005, p. 50). This is even more true of those students who do not identify as one gender or another, they could present themselves in any way possible. By understanding that a gender non-conforming student can present themselves in any way possible, it is step one on the education of accepting these students and being able to support them.

When applying to colleges and universities, many students will use the Common Application to apply to universities. Until recently, when gender non-conforming students were applying they were less likely to be able to identify their gender correctly due to limited categories on the applications. “Both the Common Application and the Universal College Application are changing their applications to make it easy for applicants who do not identify as either male or female to describe how they wish to be identified” (Jaschik, 2016, pg. 1). This change will allow potential students to be able to apply to colleges using the gender identifier that they are more comfortable with rather than ones that are within the binary. More than six hundred schools are members of the common application, the new gender option means that more applicants than ever before will have access to this new gender option (Jaschik, 2016). Fortunately, due to the number of students that this application will be able to reach more gender non-conforming students will be able to use the application in a manner that is genuine, and hopefully, validating.

Because of the 2016-bathroom controversy that started in Charlotte North Carolina, about transgender people being able to use the bathroom they identify and the city not wanting to allow it, there has been an avenue created for conversation around the United States. As a result, many campuses are now having conversations and creating policies that protect their gender non-conforming students rather than ostracizing them. (Wexler 2016). This debate, although sparked by North Carolina, has extended to other states. Louisiana's Attorney General, Jeff Landry, is now trying encourage colleges within the state to ignore the federal guidance in regards to gender non-conforming students and their restroom use (O'Donoghue, 2016).

Residential Life

When going to college, most people think of the full experience as including living on campus. An "area of concern for transgender and gender-nonconforming students, and one they often find difficult to navigate, is gender-segregated facilities, such as bathrooms, locker rooms, and residence hall rooms, where they are often at risk for harassment and violence" (Krum et al, 2013). For many students, this will result in them deciding not to live on campus. Essentially by not having someone who might talk to these students, or having a process for these students that is well known throughout the university, then this part of their college experience is taken away from them. We do not expect students to live on campus if living on campus makes them feel unsafe or unwelcomed. By not letting gender non-conforming students know that professionals are there for them in the buildings and throughout the process, they are likely to feel safer and make a more positive transition to the college experience.

Students who identify as LGBT are likely to face many issues within their residence hall experience, if they decide to live on campus. Students have reported feeling isolated and alienated from their community and face harassment more than students who do not identify

within the LGBT (Nicolazzo, 2017). “Over time, colleges have recognized the importance of residential living, and they have responded by providing various types of living experiences and residence hall programming” (Herbst & Malaney, 1999, pg. 106). Colleges understand that living on campus is important, but most are not doing enough to ensure that gender non-conforming students feel safe living on campus. Another way to support the LGBT community is to have special interest housing for them (Herbst & Malaney, 1999). Even though these programs are known to help students who are involved in them, alumni and administration push back against these ideas. There is a program at University of Massachusetts Amherst, called the “2 in 20” program that is a living community in the residence hall that is focused on the GLBT community. After evaluating the program, the assessment has shown that these students feel more included in the campus community.

When someone is living somewhere, specifically if they are living on campus, they should be able to feel comfortable in their space. Students who are gender non-conforming have many reasons for not feeling safe, welcomed and accepted. When a student is seen as passing as one gender or another they are more likely to be safe when using gender segregated spaces. “Existing evidence indicates that ‘passing’ (or being perceived by others as the gender with which one identifies) is a key factor within gender-segregated spaces that impacts whether one is denied access to the space and/or targeted for harassment and violence” (Seelman 2014, pg. 189). Through the gendered spaces and not having an area where a student who does not conform to the gender binary might feel safe, it is hard for students who are gender non-conforming to feel at home.

There is even a difference between Female to Male and Male to Female access to appropriate housing. Individuals who identify as MTF are likely to face denial of access to

gender appropriate housing and bathrooms compared to others (Seelman, 2014). The access to gender-appropriate housing is already hard for gender non-conforming students, but students who were born as a male and are transitioning to female find it even harder to find housing. “Many of the barriers faced by trans* students are genderist in nature such as ubiquity of male/female separation in classroom activities, athletics, and residence hall assignments” (Nicolazzo & Marine 2015, pg. 163). All of the barriers mentioned are that of related to gender and how people perceive someone’s gender, not individuals’ views of themselves.

Current Events

Recently in the United States there have been multiple events that have affected how universities treat gender non-conforming students. Most of these events have taken place in the South. A Texas federal judge issued an injunction that does not allow the state to enforce the federal guidance allowing transgender students to use the bathroom that aligns with their gender identity. District Judge Reed O’Connor in Texas does not want students who do not identify within the gender norms to be able to access daily necessities that align with their gender identity. (Lederman, 2016)

These students are being discriminated against for the sole reason that they identify outside of the binary.

O’Connor concluded that in issuing transgender guidance without giving notice and seeking public comment about it, the agency violated the terms of the Federal Administrative Procedure Act, which requires such steps for federal guidance that is legislative rather than interpretive (Lederman, 2016, p. 1).

Although O’Connor seems to make a pretty strong argument, he is denying the fact that these students are people and should be afforded the same rights that other students are afforded.

North Carolina and Bathrooms

The North Carolina legislature convened a special session in the beginning of 2016 to overturn an ordinance in Charlotte, North Carolina that gave gender non-conforming people the right to access the bathroom that they identify with. The law itself took away any power from local ordinances about bathroom usage and gave that power to the state (Gordon, 2016). The law defined what types of identities are protected under North Carolina law, where the state clarified that you are protected by biological sex, not by your gender identity.

Another judge in North Carolina is helping the University of North Carolina not discriminate against these gender non-conforming students. North Carolina has a law that is identified by HB2; in layman's terms it says that the bathroom someone should use, should be that of which sex they were assigned at birth. University of North Carolina system issued the following statement: "We have long said that the university has not and will not be taking steps to enforce HB2. As President [Margaret] Spellings has emphasized all along, the university has been caught in the middle of a conflict that we did not create between state law and federal guidance" (Jaschik, 2016, pg. 1).

Although President Spellings tries to have the best interest of students in mind, the ACLU issued a statement in April 2016 that stated "It's incredibly disappointing that the University of North Carolina has concluded it is required to follow this discriminatory measure at the expense of the privacy, safety, and well-being of its students and employees, particularly those who are transgender" (Brown, 2016, pg. 2). The ACLU has opposed President Spellings' stance on the law in North Carolina, and has made sure that her actual ideas were exposed. "She [President Spellings] issued a memo to the system's chancellors on Tuesday clarifying what the law requires UNC institutions to do. Many observers took that document- whose subject line was

“Guidance-Compliance with the Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act”– as a sign of Ms. Spellings’ support for the law” (Brown, 2016, pg. 2). The ALCU as well as others who are privy to this email, interpreted this email as President Spellings’ support, although the email alone does not mean that she supports or supported the law. To fully understand President Spellings’ ideas about this situation, the reader would need to understand statements that she made as the U.S. Secretary of Education. On two separate occasions, President Spellings referred to LGBT identities as lifestyles (Brown, 2016). These are not lifestyles; they are parts of people’s identities. To refer to them as lifestyles, is essentially taking away the relevance and importance of the identities.

On April 7th 2016, “HRC [Human Rights Campaign] blasted UNC President Margaret Spellings for ordering all campuses in the UNC system to discriminate against transgender students by forcing them to use restrooms and other facilities inconsistent with their gender identity” (Peters, 2016, pg. 1). Through this she wants the universities to violate federal law and conform to discriminatory provisions in the HB 2 law that Governor McCrory signed into law. Following HB2 will essentially put the schools in violation of Title IX, which could result in defunding for the schools in North Carolina (Coussens, B.A, 2016).

At Vassar, students are actively attempting to make the university accepting of their gender non-conforming peers.

The Vassar Queer Health Initiative(VQHI) is calling for all bathrooms on campus to be labeled “all gender,” with a subtitle stating: ‘Anyone can use this restroom, regardless of gender identity and/or expression.’ VQHI finds this demand to be reasonable in theory and simple in implementation (Lahore, 2016, p. 1).

The students at Vassar want to make their university more accepting of those people with identities that do not match their own, but they are getting pushback from the administration and alumni.

Summary

The research that has set up the foundation for this study has not been, for the most part, directly related. There are a few articles about residential life and gender non-conforming students, but it combines these students with lesbian, gay and bisexual students, who do not go through the same types of experiences. Grouping them together does not allow student affairs professionals to understand the unique occurrences that gender non-conforming students experience.

Chapter 3: Methodology

There is little research that exists about gender non-conforming students in the South, but even less about those students residing on campus. There could have been many different ways to explore the experience of these students, a qualitative study has been employed to help understand the experiences of these students.

A qualitative study uses a method that gains understanding of the reasons and motivations behind a particular phenomenon. It also provides the ability to compare and contrast the experiences of each individual in the study. It has the ability to explore the experiences of the participants and how those affected their participation in the study (Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F., 2012). This study uses a mainly phenomenological approach while employing a qualitative method to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of gender non-conforming student in the Southeast?
2. Are accommodations for room selection processes and on campus living options adequate?
3. Have the students observed a change in campus culture within their time at their university?

This chapter details the in-depth interviews as a branch of qualitative research and describes how participants were selected, how the data was collected, analyzed and how valid the chosen methodology is.

Research Design

This study utilized a phenomenological approach, specifically in-depth one on one interviews. Prior to the interviews, I communicated with the participants mostly through email. Through these emails, I connected with each participant so that they were able to form a bond of trust prior to the interview.

Data Collection

While preparing for this study, I decided to select six-eight students from the South that attend four-year PWIs to participate. Through these students, the goal was to understand their needs and the services they do not have access to. I used mainly Skype and in-person interviews to collect my data.

Sampling and Recruitment

The snowball sampling technique was used to gain participants. This is a technique where the researcher asks the participants and/or a gate keeper to refer more participants to them (Browne, 2005). Because the gender non-conforming community is one that is often the target of bullying and violence, a gate keeper and participants that trusted the researcher were crucial to begin with.

Criteria for being involved in this study are as follows: (1) self-identify as gender non-conforming; (2) be enrolled full-time PWI in the south (undergraduate or graduate with south representing the following states: Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia); and (3) reside on campus.

After obtaining the approval for this study, (see Appendix A), an email, (see Appendix B), was sent out to diversity offices and organizations at schools in the Southeastern region.

There was also an email sent out to housing professionals at Louisiana State University asking if they knew of anyone who could participate in the study.

Throughout the process of doing the interviews, due to the lack of available space, I had to conduct most interviews in my office, which is located in an all-female residence hall, or my apartment which is located in the same hall. I am unsure if this had any effect on the participants' experience or interview quality.

One interview in particular was with a resident assistant. This participant's experience was different than that of the other participants because the interview occurred after the participant was on the resident assistant staff and had an individual room assignment. I thought it still important to include their experience and how working through their identity for themselves and their residents affected them.

Researcher Bias

T.S. Eliot once said "People exercise an unconscious selection in being influenced". As someone who is friends with many people who are gender non-conforming, I have a desire to understand the experiences of gender non-conforming students. As a student affairs professional, I want to understand what services are or are not being offered and what might be offered.

I also had preconceived notions about the services offered at Louisiana State University. As a Graduate Residence Director, I had trouble finding information about the gender-neutral housing options on the campus; therefore, I assumed that students had the same issues, because I had more information than they did and still had issues finding them.

Limitations

In this study, I explored the lived on-campus experiences of gender non-conforming students on campus in the Southeast. There was little research that related to the topic, and I set

out to understand these lived experiences as much as possible. One of the limitations is that this group of students is often the subject of violence and bullying, so having students trust someone enough to interview them takes more time than what was allotted for this research. Another limitation is that the researcher was limited to connecting with students that were not at Louisiana State University by email and facetime or skype. Due to technological difficulties, I had to conduct the interviews I had with students who were not at Louisiana State University via phone instead of video calling.

Originally, I wanted to interview 10-15 students for this study, but because I was not able to have face-to-face conversations with many of the students who filled out my survey they were reluctant to be interviewed, and therefore I was unable to use their experiences in my study. All of the students who I interviewed are Caucasian. This identity alone does afford them some privilege.

I am also a graduate student, so my capital with the students is not as much as it would be if I were a professional. I believe that if I were a professional, more people would have felt comfortable confiding their experiences to me. There would have been a known standard of professionalism, because I am a full-time employee, instead of being a graduate student. Conversely, this could have led them to trust me more as someone who is still a student.

When recruiting students to participate in the student, I reached out to LGBT organizations on campuses in the south, coworkers who had connections at other campuses and I tried to blind email some of the heads of diversity departments. I was not able to get much involvement from institutions other than my own besides two students. One at the University of Alabama and one at University of Memphis. This limits the information I was able to gather about schools in other southern states.

Summary

Throughout the process of this study, I began to learn more about each student that participated, and it made me want to learn more about how to help these gender non-conforming students. In the next section, I will go over each interview and showcase how important individual experiences are. Their individual experiences being extraordinarily different, it shows the vast array of experiences that gender non-conforming students can go through.

Chapter 4: Findings

Throughout the interviews with my participants, I learned that each student whom I was interviewing had a very different experience. Even though four out of the six of my interviews were students at Louisiana State University, they still had vastly different experiences than each other. Each of the students that I interviewed has had a unique experience that has helped me understand the needs of these students. By far, they are not representative of the whole gender non-conforming student population, but their experiences may help student affairs professionals understand how to support them. In Table 4.1 below I will summarize my participants.

Individual Interviews

Table 4.1 Participants Demographic

| Pseudonym | Classification | University | Pronouns | Racial Identity |
|-----------|------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Ari | Senior | University of Alabama | They/Them | White |
| Eli | Senior | Louisiana State University | They/Them | White |
| Frankie | Sophomore | Louisiana State University | He/Him | White |
| Dakota | Freshman | The University of Memphis | They/Them | White |
| Atliss | Sophomore/Junior | Louisiana State University | He/him or They/Them | White |
| Taylor | Senior | Louisiana State University | They/Them | White |

Ari

Ari attends the University of Alabama, a state institution in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. They are a senior and will be graduating in May 2017. Ari is majoring in Chemical Engineering and Chemistry. I spoke with them in length about their experience on campus at the University of Alabama. Ari said that they are often misgendered on their campus. Usually this involves being

misgendered through the use of wrong pronouns. Ari tries to surround themselves with people who are knowledgeable about non-binary identities.

Ari has been in a committed relationship for two years, and does not notice the questioning of their sexual identity as much as they did before. I asked Ari how they usually respond when people misgender them, or question their gender identity, and they responded saying they usually are screaming internally.

Internal scream. It depends on who it is. People who I just pass, teacher sometimes, I won't even go into it. Being in an engineering field, it doesn't really come up very much. It's hard because when you're talking to the person, you're less likely to know if they don't use your pronouns because they're not going to general use them when you're there. On the off chance that they do, it's a matter of gauging whether or not that battle is going to be productive. Someone I know and somebody I care about will be like, 'Hey listen' and people have usually been pretty receptive. If not, I am just like, 'Bye I don't want to talk to you anymore'. Sort of like picking the battles I want to fight.

I spoke with Ari about if the campus culture at Alabama helped or hurt their experience, and they responded by saying that it was both. There are times when they do not feel safe walking around campus at night, or before and after football games.

Like I said, this tradition thing is a big problem but it's also helped me grow stronger and understand that in order for change to actually happen, you have to have people in areas like this in the trenches to fight the real battles.

Going deeper into their experience, we spoke about their experience living on campus. Ari's didn't have any prominent interactions with residential life staff as a resident, but now as someone on campus who advocates for change, Ari says that the interactions with staff have been excellent. When Ari did live on campus they had one roommate who was transphobic and queerphobic. They lived in a suite style room, Ari state that this made it easier for them to be able to deal with the issues, because they had their own sleeping space and just shared common areas.

Ari spoke about their most shocking experience at Alabama being The Machine, an underground corrupt Greek organization. According to Ari, this organization is responsible for some of the traditions at the University of Alabama that are most harmful for the minority groups of students. The Machine is comprised of alumni that still have a large say in what happens within the university. Ari believes that one of the places The Machine has less influence is in the housing process.

The housing application at the University of Alabama did have some issues according to Ari. There is no gender inclusive housing option. On the application process students are required to put male or female, there is no write in option or a way for these students to go through the process to live where they identify instead of where the gender they were assigned at birth put them. Ari has been currently working with residential life and the main reasoning they are given for not implementing is what alumni or parents would think.

Atliss

Atliss attends Louisiana State University(LSU), a state institution located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. (Atliss goes by the pronouns, they/them and he/him, and for the purpose of this I will be using they/them by the request of the individual.) Atliss chose LSU because of the instate financial aid package. Throughout the education budget cuts in 2016 in Louisiana, Atliss has given a lot of thought to transferring universities because LSU does not currently have the major they are aspiring to graduate with a degree in. "I love LSU, it will always be my school, but without financial aid, it is just too expensive." Atliss has seen change at LSU though their activism in starting LTA (Louisiana Trans Advocates) and through the people that attend LSU.

Although they have seen some change, Atliss still notices that the student body at the university is focused on partying and having a good time, rather than education, which is what

they would like to see the focus be. Atliss attends LSU to learn, but has had many experiences that have made it much harder for them to learn. I asked Atliss if they have every been questioned about their gender identity.

I get questioned a lot from my parents, mostly having to do with my hair. It is kind of long and my parents are like “Well if you are really a boy then why do you have long hair” and I am like “there are so many cis guys that have just like me, why can’t I have hair like this” Then there are days like today when I am dressed like this, and people are just like “Really you are going to correct me on your pronouns and you aren’t even trying” and I am like “well yeah, you know sometimes I have to breathe and I can’t wear my binder” Stuff like that happens to me all the time.

We then talked about Atliss’ sexual orientation, and how that affected them and their surroundings. Atliss identifies as Transmasculine or a Transman. They are attracted to males. They are gay because they identify as a man.

When I came out right before prom they were like, “Oh is your boyfriend going to wear a dress to prom since you’re wearing a tux?” stuff like that, but never really understanding that I am gay because I identify as a man, not that I am straight because I was born assigned female at birth.

Although Atliss lacks a support system at home, they have a healthy support system here at LSU. Atliss lived with another gender non-conforming student, who took the responsibility for figuring out the rooming situation. The two were assigned to a room in Pentagon in a male stack, because that is the gender identity that they identified mostly with. The Pentagon community is a hall bath community that is separated by gender in stacks on LSU’s campus.

We never really had any issues with any of the people we lived with, it was just kind of gross. My second semester I switched in the same stack but living with someone who was assigned male at birth and identified as female. We were on the top floor and surrounded by rooms with two cis guys we shared a bathroom and they were gross

Atliss lived where they identified, and the only issue with the people that presented themselves were the hygiene issues of those that lived with them. They did mention a problem with the programming of their student identification card that got them into their building, every time the

system would update, Atliss would not be able to get into their specific living quarters. The door handle of their specific room broke at one point during the semester and that was a traumatic experience for them.

Our door handle broke, and they didn't get it fixed for about two weeks, so I was just afraid that I would walk into my room and someone would be ready to kill me.

Through speaking with Atliss it was apparent that they were scared at this time. Their body language was closed off and they did not want to talk about the issue. We moved on pretty quickly after they said that it was the only problem they really had in their community the whole year.

The most shocking experience that Atliss had on campus was when they were chased by two cis males while riding their bike back to campus from their boyfriend's off campus apartment. The men continued to run after Atliss even after they ran into a pole and broke their knee. Atliss continued along and once the men had stopped chasing them, they were hesitant about calling the police, because of prior dealings with them and the lack of care that was presented to them.

Atliss mentioned that there was a difference in the way that they were treated by Residential Staff, but it was not a bad difference.

They were really super supportive of anybody. All five trans people in the Pentagon we're all friends, and I am sure we were a mess to them, but they handled everything so well and res life was fantastic with us.

The staff in the community that Atliss lived in, showed to them that they were supported and that it did not matter that they didn't identify within the gender binary, that they were still a person and would be treated as such.

Eli

Eli was a senior at LSU at the time of the interview and has since graduated. They attended LSU because of financial aid. The university was close to family, and their friends were also attending LSU. When asked how they would describe LSU campus culture, they commented

Very white frat boy centered, with an emphasis on sports, mostly football and religion and the culture that comes with it. This is very much what is promoted when one thinks of the school and what comes to mind to those who don't attend

Eli did not feel like the side of LSU that they had recently had come into contact with was advertised to the general public. They noted being able to see the passage of several resolutions that helped gender non-conforming students be able to be safer on campus.

As the leader of one of the LGBTQIA organizations on campus, Eli was questioned about their gender identity and their sexual identity fairly often. They were often seen representing Spectrum, a LGBTQIA organization on campus, in Free Speech Ally, or in the campus newspaper. As a response, Eli would respond that they are queer and use the moment to teach other about their identity and the reclaiming of the word queer.

While living on campus, Eli did not encounter any issues regarding their gender identity, although it was only in their senior year that they actually had a conversation with their roommate about gender identity. Before their senior year they had only mentioned to their roommates that they were involved in Spectrum. They only had one roommate say negative things about them, but they did not talk or see each other often, therefore Eli just dealt with it.

When I asked Eli if the campus culture was one that hurt or helped their experience on campus, they replied that it generally hurt their experience. They cited an experience with a Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity banner that mocked the first openly gay NFL player.

White frat boy culture can be overwhelming and hurtful to minorities and when people think ‘Frat Guys’ as an integral part of LSU, they believe that the whole campus is hostile towards minority students, and minorities in general.

Eli mentioned that the shocking experience was during their junior year when they had to deal with multiple hate groups on campus and they realized how much homophobia was still active on campus. Eli has experienced the homophobia on campus first hand.

I’ve had slurs yelled out at me by students passing by our table and the Christians who come to break on campus have cornered me several times. Most notable was the time I was spat on by frat guys for no other reason than my gender non-conforming appearance.

While they have had these horrible things happen to them, they still believe that they are lucky because they know others who have had it much worse than them. Throughout the process of applying for housing and getting roommates, the only issue they had was there was no way to identify a LGBTQIA friendly roommate.

Taylor

Taylor is a senior at Louisiana State University and attended the university due to their parents being alumni and the financial aid package they received. Taylor described their campus culture as one that is diverse but is extremely Southern. They did say that most people who attend LSU have one thing in common– their love for the football team and it may not always be healthy, they said, but it is something. When asked if the campus culture has changed at all since their time at the university, Taylor stated that it was slowly changing.

Within residential life, gender inclusive housing has started this year, because students have asked for it. I’ve seen that change happen and I’m really excited about it. I want to see it grow. I think we’re on track to do something well.

Taylor works for residential life as a resident assistant. They have worked in two different communities and came out as gender non-conforming while working on an all-female floor.

When asked if they have every been questioned about their sexual identity, they responded that they do not get the question, but they feel like it is because of the way that they present themselves. When they get questioned about their gender identity they typically respond by explaining that this is their experience, and if you can live with it, then great, if not then you do not have to.

Last year is when I actually came out. I was on a female floor with a hall bath, so that was kind of strange, especially managing students. I had to still come out with that process and make sure that my students still felt comfortable coming to me and things like that, which I don't think was too difficult.

Taylor was more worried about how to support their students than how to support themselves. Their supervisors made sure that they took the time to think about how both their students and themselves, would be comfortable.

I had a good support system, but being able to move to a space that was specifically for people like me was wonderful.

Currently, Taylor works in a community that has a section that is designated for gender non-conforming students. Being able to work in a community that is designed for students like them was helpful to their growth and allowed them to live in a community where they could help students like themselves.

The biggest issue that Taylor has had to deal with while living on campus was coming out. They wanted someone to validate their feelings, because their parents were not supportive and they knew that.

But having to admit it to myself and then finding someone else to tell, because I needed to tell someone so that I felt more validated, and that I felt I was supported because I knew that my parents weren't going to. Finding that outlet was something that was a challenge, but not too much of a challenge because of work experience in residential life.

Taylor felt like they had a support system within residential life. They felt like if they had a problem or needed something, they could count on the professionals in residential life to help

them come up with a solution to whatever the problem was. They did recognize that most students do not realize that the professionals in residential life are willing and able to be supportive of gender non-conforming students.

Whenever Taylor has had issues with the people at the university not supporting them, it has been at events where outsiders are invited in to explore the university. When LSU has preview days, high school students and their parents are more likely to comment about Taylor's appearance than the students that currently attend LSU. Taylor described these moments as learning moments, not only for the parents and students but for Taylor themselves. Using this moment to be able to explain about gender non-conforming students and their identity is something that Taylor has become accustomed to. They had to train their community student staff separately from the already prescribed training to help them understand who Taylor is as a person and how their gender identity plays a role in the community.

Taylor has had to correct professors on their name many times; some professors they have had to correct every class period. For a name change to happen at LSU, the student needs to have changed their name with the state first. Although the academic system that the university uses, Moodle, does allow students to add a preferred name, that does not change the student's name throughout the university. Even though this is something that is advertised for students, professors rarely use the preferred name, which outs students in the classroom.

Taylor does not have familial support, which is something that students can sometimes assume they will get when they are in college. Taylor's parents will not allow them to use their preferred name at home, or let them tell their younger siblings about their name change or their non-binary identity. Their identity is ignored when they are in their home because of their

parents' lack of support. This has caused Taylor to go home as little as possible, even with wanting to see their younger siblings.

Frankie

Frankie was the only person that I interviewed that did not identify with they/them pronouns at all. Frankie used he/him/his pronouns and presented as a male. He attends LSU, and is a sophomore who works as an orientation leader. Frankie described his campus as relatively welcoming. He thinks that minorities are standing up and gaining a greater voice on campus which is helping the culture at the university get better.

When asked if he gets questioned about his gender or sexual identity he responded with yes. Frankie stated that he usually does not discuss his sexual identity, because it is not something that he feels the need to talk about nor does he feel confident enough to address. Frankie is however very confident in his gender identity and is willing to discuss that with people. Generally, he will tell people, "I am a boy", and if they have more questions he will answer them, but the standard conversation ends there.

Living on campus for Frankie was superb. He lived in an all-female hall in the Mass Communications Residential College.

They all just thought I was the ham of the hall. They all were so funny and so cool. They were really sweet and very accepting. Everyone used appropriate pronouns. Everyone accepted me for who I was, I just become the boy who is on the hall. I had a really positive experience, and my RA never made me feel any less or anything like that.

Frankie stated that the issues that he was dealing with while living on campus were internal issues. He was surprised that he did not get bullied for being who he was. Frankie felt that the university culture was one that could be negative to a gender non-conforming student's experience, but only if that person did not know what organizations to get involved in.

There is no denying, we are a predominantly White institution in the South, some of the things that are said are very inappropriate, very racist, and very sexist. I think that if you surround yourself with that it is very easy to have this university tear you down. If you try your best to get out of that and you try your best to make a community of your own, you surround yourself with people you know will protect you. I was at a bar one time, and some guy jumped on me to attack me, I am not sure why, I cannot confirm if it was because of my gender identity, but one of my friends stopped the guy and said ‘You do not touch him’ while pointing at me.

Frankie surrounds himself with people who will help protect him. These people are usually educated about the gender binary, and how those who fall outside the gender binary represent themselves. Frankie also believes that it is important not to put up a barrier when others put up a barrier. It is likely that you can help someone if you do not also put up this barrier of communication. Frankie wants to help people understand those who fall outside of the gender binary, and he understands that as a transman who is White, he does have privilege.

When asked what his most shocking experience on campus thus far has been, Frankie recounted an experience as an orientation leader. He was extremely nervous to put himself out there as a leader on campus with every incoming freshman who did not know anything about him.

The fact of being their leader when I wasn’t necessarily confident in who I was and I did not have a single problem over orientation. In fact, some of the students are still people who talk to me today. I was also a small group leader for our STRIPES(Orientation) program and I ended up meeting a young trans man and we had a very long conversation about LSU. They never questioned me or who I was or what I was doing.

Frankie was able to affect people’s lives, while they were helping him feel comfortable in his own skin. That experience helped him grow into himself and for the first time he woke up in the morning and didn’t immediately think, ‘Oh I am a girl biologically’. He was able to be himself and live within a community as himself for an entire summer.

Dakota

Dakota is a second semester freshman at the University of Memphis. They attended Memphis to be closer to their family, and only applied to one other university. They view their campus as an inclusive community. After the recent election of Donald Trump, Dakota noticed that there was some tension on campus. The tension only lasted a few days and was centered around protest that was happening on campus. Dakota's family supports them in every aspect of their life, including their gender identity.

I have no issue telling people that I use they/them pronouns, because if they are not cool with that then that is on them. It is their problem, I don't have to deal with them, it is a big campus.

Dakota is confident in their gender identity, and that was apparent through the answers in the rest of their interview. They started using gender neutral pronouns about three and a half years before our interview, and it had become a normalized part of their identity and everyday life.

Understanding how to care for themselves mentally and physically is a skill that Dakota has been working on since they came out as gender non-conforming.

One time I did go on a date with a guy, we were just talking and I told him that I used they/them pronouns and he looked me in the eye s and told me to go lynch myself. I told him the date was over and he needed to take me home. He argued and said that he was joking, but it wasn't okay with me and I told him that, and told him to take me home.

Dakota draws a line and does not allow anyone to cross it and make them feel uncomfortable.

They do not feel the need deal with someone else not being understanding of them, and that is something that has helped them be confident in their identity.

Dakota was apprehensive about living on campus because they thought it was going to be rough, because they did not identify within the gender binary. They haven't had any issues while living on campus that relate to them being gender non-conforming. They have had issues with not being afforded the freedoms that a student would get living off campus.

Part of being a gender non-conforming student for Dakota is being able to present however they feel on a certain day. They believe that University of Memphis has fostered the ability for them to express themselves in the way that they want. Although they believe this, they have not had many interactions with their residential hall staff, or any staff on campus.

The most shocking experience that Dakota has dealt with so far has been the vast acceptance of them throughout their interactions at the university. They were not expecting to be accepted on the level that they have been. Dakota understands their privilege of being a White, gender non-conforming student and how that affects their interaction throughout the university. They use that privilege to educate others on their identity.

Data Analysis

After interviewing all six participants, I analyzed the data and uncovered specific themes. After reading through all of the interviews and identifying five major themes, I was able to gain a true understanding of these students and their experiences. As well as how their environment helped or hurt their overall development in the university setting. I applied Bronfenbrenner's Developmental Ecological Systems Model through understanding and analyzing the environment around the students who I interviewed.

Themes

Throughout the interviews, five themes kept arising. Through the next section, I will be discussing these themes in detail and explaining how they hurt or helped the students. Each student experiences college differently and that does not change with the gender non-conforming students. Even though there are themes among their experiences, each of these students had a much different experience than the one interviewed before and after them.

Choosing Battles

Throughout the interviews, it became obvious that each student that I interviewed did not see the same battles as worth having. These battles being educational conversations with people who do not understand them, or people who do not care to get to know them. When choosing what battles to fight and which ones to just turn away from, these students thought about many things. Most importantly they thought about how their personal health was going to be impacted positively or negatively.

If a conversation was going to impact the student I was interviewing, then it was less likely that they were going to have the conversation. These students understand that their self-care is important. The ability to have conversations about their identity in attempts to educate others, and understanding when it is no longer a viable option for them to have the conversations and be able to be mentally okay, is not something that many college students have mastered yet.

Community

Community is an important aspect to all college student life. To a gender non-conforming student, community may sometimes be the difference between mentally healthy and mentally unhealthy. Every student that I interviewed mentioned that they surround themselves with people who understand them. Having a community of people provides support for the person. When a person is able to turn to their community, they have a better support system.

When interviewing the students, I saw a direct correlation between happiness and community. The students who had a better community were able to talk more about their experiences as a gender non-conforming student and delved deeper without being asked follow up questions. During the interviews, it appeared to me that the students whose community valued them, had less of an issue sharing their experiences.

Name Changes

At all three universities included in my study, there was not an easy name change process for students who no longer want to go by the name assigned to them at birth. This is an issue that each student brought up. From identification cards, access to their building, and professors calling them by their dead name and not the name that they go by.

This issue of not being able to change the name that a student goes by with the university can cause a student mental stress. It can also cause the student dysphoria. When a student suffers from dysphoria they are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety (Pedrelli, Nyer, Yeung, Zulauf, Wilens, 2015). This does not allow the student to participate in the campus community and it shows through the answers that the students gave in their interviews.

Room Selection Process

During interviews, I asked each participant what they would change if anything about the housing selection. Every one of the participants identified the room selection process as one that needed to be reviewed and changed. Taylor thought that LSU had an adequate process, but mentioned that it is not advertised. There is one paragraph on a page on the residential life website for incoming and current students that explains that explains who to call if someone is interested in gender inclusive housing. This paragraph is listed right under 2 paragraphs about students with disabilities. Taylor thought there should be some more information available and easier access for those students who desired to live in gender inclusive housing options.

Ari, Frankie, Dakota and Atliss all mentioned processes that did not take them out of traditional halls but allowed a way for there to be preferences on the room application where students could put they are okay living with someone that identifies as gender non-conforming. Dakota mentioned that it would be better than nothing if they asked if students were okay with

living with other students who identify under the LGBT umbrella. Eli thought there needed to be some change, but at the time of the interview could not pinpoint the exact change that needed to happen.

Tradition & Safety

One of the most common themes I continued to hear throughout the interviews was each university's traditions. The Southeastern United States is rich with traditions, and that does not stop with the universities. For instance, at The University of Alabama, there is an underground Greek organization called the Machine. According to Ari, a participant in this study, the organization has an influence on everything that goes on at the university. In Ari's perspective when they are trying to make The University of Alabama less conservative, the Machine puts a stop to that because they are pushing the tradition and keeping their hold on the university.

Tradition at Louisiana State University focuses around football. Most of the LSU students that I interviewed mentioned the people that visit the university who are not students are the people who cause the most issues on campus. During home football games, there are upwards of 20000 people on the campus grounds, and many of the people who are on campus are also consuming alcohol. The students I interviewed did not feel comfortable walking around on campus during these times. There have been issues of gender non-conforming students being spit on, yelled at and chased after. The students I interviewed saw the intake of alcohol and attendance at football games as the biggest tradition at LSU.

These two traditions are ones that hurt the experience of the gender non-conforming student. It does not allow the students to be themselves, or make their environment one where they can develop. These students are working to make their campuses better, but these traditions are not helping.

Summary

Throughout the interviews, it was obvious that there are some changes that need to happen. Student affairs professionals need to be more aware of the issues that arise for gender non-conforming students. They may not self-identify themselves if they do not feel comfortable going to a professional. Gender non-conforming students know what they need, universities need to listen.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications and Recommendations

During the process of interviewing the participants I was able to learn a myriad of information about them. To understand the lives of these students and the distress that is caused by these students just wanting to be themselves. I was brought to tears more than once during the interviewing of the students. In this chapter, I will discuss the findings and how they intertwine with the Ecology Development Model. I will then discuss the implications of what these students have experienced and then I will then make recommendations for the future.

Discussion

When I first started interviewing these students, I wanted to answer three questions. These questions are what I based my research questions on.

1. What are the lived experiences of gender non-conforming student in the south?
2. Are accommodations for room selection processes and on campus living options adequate?
3. Have the students observed a change in campus culture within their time at their university?

As I went through the process of interviewing these students, I came to understand that knowing them was something special and not everyone had the unique chance of knowing these amazing students who are resilient and are willing to be who they are, even when most of the society in which they live in, does not accept them.

These students have such a wide variety of lived experiences. Each of their backgrounds are vastly different and they all attend universities with different levels of support. The one commonality between all of them, is that they have created a community of other queer people around them to support them while at their respective universities. It does not matter if they have

a family that supports them, they still have, what has been referred to as, queer families. These queer families are the groups of people that the participants surrounded themselves with; these people usually identify under the LGBTQIA umbrella. The participants relied heavily on this group of people to ensure that they had support in everything that they did.

The participants did see a few issues with the on campus living selection process, but each person I interviewed thought the facilities offered were more than adequate that the three separate universities. The process to select roommates at these universities is where the participants saw that there could be some improvement. In the coming sections I will discuss the implications of this process needing improvements as well as recommendations on how to improve it.

When inquiring about change, I wanted to be intentional and ask the participants if they had perceived any change in culture. This was beneficial because each person may perceive the same situation differently. When asked this question, each participant responded that the culture at their university had changed while they were in attendance. To relate back to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Development Model, the exosystem, which is compromised of the university as a setting, is changing or evolving. In order to interact with their environment more effortlessly, it is key that the universities continue to evolve. While the university evolves, the people within the university are likely to evolve, which creates a healthier microsystem for the student to interact within.

Housing selection processes at universities are conducted in many different ways. As a housing graduate student I am aware that these processes are put together for the convenience of many. I am no stranger to the idea that changing this process for a minority is not something that can be done right away, or even at all in some cases. Likewise, I also understand that these

students are having to choose roommates, sometimes blindly because there is not a way to tell who is okay with living with someone that doesn't conform to the gender binary. These students are more likely to be roomed with someone who does not accept them if the process does not include a section on identity, which I will go into more detail in during the recommendations section.

Having tradition be important on a university campus is not always a bad thing, but when the tradition is harming a group of students, then it needs to be reevaluated and something needs to change. Tradition at the University of Alabama and Louisiana State University has harmed the experience of gender non-conforming students by being highly entwined with the aggressive male normal associated with fraternity life. Fraternity life is not something inherently bad, but without the right leaders, there have been some incidents at both universities that have been detrimental to gender non-conforming students.

Implications

This research should provide information to anyone who is working with gender non-conforming students within the South, not only ones that live on campus. While working with these students it is imperative to understand that each of their experiences is going to be vastly different than the one before. There are many different experiences that gender non-conforming students go through on a day to day basis within just their friend group. Add the outside world to the scenario, and it is adding more experiences that they are dealing with.

It should be understood that the political climate has much to do with how students respond to this type of research. I completed this study in a political climate that was not conducive to self-identification of students who do not identify within the gender binary. Making

it even more crucial for there to be research done, and for gender non-conforming students to be supported.

Student affairs professionals might use this information to be intentional with these students and not overwhelming. While working with gender non-conforming students, they can understand just some of the issues that arise within a residential setting as well as the campus community. I was only able to begin to understand the queer family; working with these students through more than just one interview could assist the practitioner in understanding the queer family more, and how this family supports the student. When student affairs professionals are able to help students of any identity, it enhances their experience at the university.

Recommendations

Throughout the interviews, the participants came up with recommendations, which I will outline in this section along with my own recommendations. I hope that these recommendations help future student affairs professionals and gender non-conforming students.

My first set of recommendations are from my participants. They have recommended that there be a section of the housing application stating whether a student is willing to live with a gender non-conforming student. This could be as simple as a yes or no question, or it could be a short answer. That would depend on the university and how their on-campus living application is formatted. Something that could be easily put in the application and not add much more time to the application.

At most universities, the application asks if someone is male or female. The participants suggested that there be a way to denote if they are gender non-conforming. Again, something that does not add more time to the application; it could be a drop-down menu with more than just

male/female listed, it could be a short answer question. These students want to be able to identify themselves, without making other people's jobs harder.

My second set of recommendations are some that I have created throughout the process of interviewing my participants. The first one being that on every campus there should be a professional staff member that has the responsibility to help these students through each process that is going to be difficult for them. Selecting housing, changing their name and communicating with professors. Universities should have someone on staff who has the working relationship with all the appropriate people so that these students do not feel like they are getting lost within the system.

Universities should make it easier for students to change their name. The participants confided in me that it was upwards of \$400 to change their name with the state that they live in, and only after that would the university change their name in the system. Most of the students I interviewed are paying for college by themselves, and do not have an extra four hundred dollars to pay for them to get their name changed. Not only this, but changing their name does not automatically change their gender marker, which is not even possible in some states, because many of these students do not identify within the gender binary. If universities created a process where these students could change their names within confines of the university, it would create a culture around them of more support.

I suggest that there be future research be done in multiple areas. One of the areas I would like there to be research done, would be how Title IX issues relate to gender non-conforming students. There should be more research done in how adequate resources are provided to gender non-conforming students. Another area in which research should be done, is how faculty and staff are trained to support gender non-conforming students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, gender non-conforming students are more resilient than I first imagined. The students I interviewed had been through many dealings that could have stopped them from wanting to be themselves but did not. The students I interviewed have a desire to be who they are and they are not willing to let anyone stop them from doing that. Gender non-conforming students know what they need, we just need to listen.

References

- Beemyn, B. G. (2005). Making Campuses More Inclusive of Transgender Students. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education*, 3(1), 77-87.
- Beemyn, B., Curtis, B., Davis, M., & Tubbs, N. J. (2005). Transgender Issues on College Campuses. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2005(111), 49-60.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model. (1979). Retrieved March 01, 2017, Retrieved from <http://intascprinciple2.weebly.com/bronfenbrennersquos-ecological-systems-model.html>
- Brown, S. (2016, April 08). Spellings Says Controversial LGBT Law "Sends a Chill" Through U. of North Carolina. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.chronicle.com>
- Browne, K. (2005). Snowball sampling: using social networks to research non-heterosexual women. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8(1), 47-60. doi:10.1080/1364557032000081663
- Case, K. A., Kanenberg, H., Erich, S. A., & Tittsworth, J. (2012). Transgender Inclusion in University Nondiscrimination Statements: Challenging Gender-Conforming Privilege through student activism. *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(1), 145-161.
- Coussens, B. A. (2016, May 09). Teaching Title IX While Violating It: UNC and HB2. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brian-a-coussens/teaching-title-ix-while-v_b_9854338.html
- Datz, T. (2012, February 20). One in ten children face elevated risk of abuse, future PTSD, due to gender nonconformity. *Harvard School of Public Health*. Retrieved from <http://hsph.harvard.edu/news>
- Gordon, M. (2016, March 26). Understanding HB2: North Carolina's newest law solidifies state's role in defining discrimination. Retrieved from <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/politics-government/article68401147.html>
- Galupo, M. P., Bauerband, L. A., Gonzalez, K. A., Hagen, D. B., Hether, S. D., & Krum, T. E. (2014). Transgender friendship experiences: Benefits and barriers of friendships across gender identity and sexual orientation. *Feminism and Psychology*, 24(2), 193-215.
- Herbst, S., & Malaney, G. (1999). Perceived Value of a Special Interest Residential Program for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Students. *NASPA Journal*, 36(2), 106-119.

Jaschik, S. (2016, April 26). Common Application and Universal College Application move beyond giving applicants choice of male and female. Inside Higher Ed. Retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com>

Jaschik, S. (2016, August 29). Judge Blocks UNC From Enforcing Bathroom Law. Inside Higher Ed. Retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com>

Krum, T. E., Davis, K. S., & Galupo, M. P. (2013). Gender-Inclusive Housing Preferences: A Survey of College-Aged Transgender Students. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 10, 64-82.

Lederman, D. (2016, August 23). Court's Decision on U.S. transgender policy could threaten other Title IX rules. Inside Higher Ed. Retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com>

Levitt, H., PhD, & Ippolito, M., MS. (2014). Being Transgender: The experience of Transgender Identity Development. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 61(12), 1727-1758.

Lahore. (2016, February 28). Vassar Activist Demand That All Bathrooms on Campus Be Designated "All-Gender". Plus Media Solutions. Retrieved from <http://www.lexisnexis.com>

Nicolazzo, Z., & Marine, S. B. (2012). "It Will Change if People Keep Talking": Trans* Students in College and University Housing. *Journal of College and University Student Housing*, 42(1), 161-177.

Nicolazzo, Z., Renn, K. A., & Quaye, S. J. (2017). *Trans* in college: transgender students' strategies for navigating campus life and the institutional politics of inclusion*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

O'Donoghue, Julia (2016, May 18). Attorney General Jeff Landry encourages schools to ignore Obama's transgender bathroom rules. Retrieved from http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/05/attorney_general_jeff_landry_e.html

Pedrelli, P., Nyer, M., Yeung, A., Zulauf, C., & Wilens, T. (2015, October). College Students: Mental Health Problems and Treatment Considerations. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4527955/>

Peters, S. (2016, April 08). UNC President Orders Campuses to Discriminate Against Transgender Students. States News Service. Retrieved from <http://www.lexisnexis.com>

Pryor, J. T. (2015). Out in the Classroom: Transgender Student Experience at a Large Public University. *Journal of College Student Development*, 56(5), 440-455.

Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2012). *Learning in the field: an introduction to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Schilt, K., & Westbrook, L. (2009). "Gender Normals," Transgender People, and the Social Maintenance of Heterosexuality. *Gender and Society*, 23(4), 440-464.

Seelman, K. L. (2014). Transgender Individuals Access to College Housing and Bathrooms: Findings from the National Transgender Discrimination Survey. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*, 26, 186-206.

Toomey, R. B., Ryan, C., Diaz, R. M., Card, N. A., & Russell, S. T. (2010). Gender-Nonconforming Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth: School Victimization and Young Adult Psychosocial Adjustment. *Developmental Psychology*, 46(6), 1580-1589.

Wexler, E. (2016, May 24). An Issue Beyond Carolina. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com>

Appendix A: Approval for Research and Continuation

ACTION ON PROTOCOL APPROVAL REQUEST



Institutional Review Board
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

TO: Danielle Alsandor
ELRC

FROM: Dennis Landin
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: April 5, 2016

RE: IRB# 3708

TITLE: Gender Beyond Birth: The Lived Experiences of Gender Non-Conforming College Students at Predominantly White Institutions in the South

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: New Protocol

Review type: Full ☐ Expedited ☒ **Review date:** 3/18/2016

Risk Factor: Minimal ☒ Uncertain ☐ Greater Than Minimal ☐

Approved ☒ **Disapproved** ☐

Approval Date: 4/5/2016 **Approval Expiration Date:** 4/4/2017

Re-review frequency: (annual unless otherwise stated)

Number of subjects approved: 30

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable):

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable) _____

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman 

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –

Continuing approval is **CONDITIONAL** on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE: When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc.**

**All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>*

ACTION ON PROTOCOL CONTINUATION REQUEST



Institutional Review Board
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

TO: Joy Blanchard
Education

FROM: Dennis Landin
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: October 18, 2016

RE: IRB# 3708

TITLE: Gender Beyond Birth: The Lived Experiences of Gender Non-Conforming College Students at Predominantly White Institutions in the South

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: Continuation

Review type: Full ☐ Expedited ☒ **Review date:** 10/17/2016

Risk Factor: Minimal ☒ Uncertain ☐ Greater Than Minimal ☐

Approved ☒ **Disapproved** ☐

Approval Date: 10/17/2016 **Approval Expiration Date:** 4/4/2017

Re-review frequency: (annual unless otherwise stated)

Number of subjects approved: 10

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable):

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable)

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman 

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –

Continuing approval is **CONDITIONAL** on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE: Make sure to use bcc when emailing more than one recipient.**

**All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>*

ACTION ON PROTOCOL CONTINUATION REQUEST



Institutional Review Board
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

TO: Joy Blanchard
Education

FROM: Dennis Landin
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: October 18, 2016

RE: IRB# 3708

TITLE: Gender Beyond Birth: The Lived Experiences of Gender Non-Conforming College Students at Predominantly White Institutions in the South

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: Continuation

Review type: Full ☐ Expedited ☒ **Review date:** 10/17/2016

Risk Factor: Minimal ☒ Uncertain ☐ Greater Than Minimal ☐

Approved ☒ **Disapproved** ☐

Approval Date: 10/17/2016 **Approval Expiration Date:** 4/4/2017

Re-review frequency: (annual unless otherwise stated)

Number of subjects approved: 10

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable):

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable)

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman 

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –
Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:**

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE: Make sure to use bcc when emailing more than one recipient.**

**All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>*

Appendix B: Recruitment Email

Hello!

My name is Tiffany Shierling and I am a Higher Education Administration Master's student at Louisiana State University (LSU). I am working on my thesis research project titled, Gender Beyond Birth: The Lived Experiences of Gender Nonconforming College Students at Predominantly White Institutions in the South. The purpose of this study is to better understand the lived experiences of gender non-conforming students who attend four-year institutions in the South and reside on campus. I ask for your assistance with this project by participating in the study if you meet the below criteria and/or sharing this e-mail with others to help recruit study participants.

For participation in the study, individuals must: (1) self-identify as gender non-conforming; (2) be an undergraduate or graduate enrolled full-time at a four-year institution in the South (e.g. LA, MS, AR, AL, NC, SC, TN, & GA); and (3) reside on campus. This study has been approved by LSU's Institutional Review Board (please see attached documentation). This project is a personal passion of mine and I hope to use the findings to educate higher education administrators, student affairs educators, and faculty about ways to enhance gender nonconforming college students' experiences on campus. For additional information, please e-mail me at tshierl@lsu.edu.

If you meet the above criteria, please visit the link below:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1fYbusqXuKddGWgWUBylMlh_jsAvTzfJ1FIbDQZZ9i5Y/viewform

Thank you for your time!

Tiffany

Appendix C: Consent Form

Consent Form for Non-Clinical Study

Research Study Title: Gender Beyond Birth: The Lived Experiences of Gender Nonconforming College Students in the South

Performance Sites: Louisiana State University and via Skype, FaceTime, and Google+ Hangout.

Investigators: The following investigator is available for questions about this study.

* Tiffany Shierling, LSU Master's Student, Higher Education Administration, 678.332.1019, tshier1@lsu.edu

* Dr. Joy Blanchard, LSU Assistant Professor, ELRC, 225.578.2192, jlblanchard@lsu.edu

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research study is to learn about the lived experiences of gender non-conforming students who attend four-year institutions in the South and reside on campus. This study investigates their experiences at Predominately White Institutions. What are the living experiences of gender non-conforming students in the South? How do gender non-conforming students recommend higher education administrators and student affairs educators engage them on campus?

Subject Inclusion: For participation in the study, research subjects must meet the following criteria: (1) self-identify as gender non-conforming; (2) be enrolled full-time at a four-year institution in the South (undergraduate or graduate; with South representing the following states: Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama, and Georgia); and (3) reside on campus.

Number of subjects: 10

Study Procedures: Potential study participants will be recruited via e-mail and Facebook posts and provided with information regarding the topic and the informed consent for review. Individuals agreeing to participate in the study will sign, scan, and e-mail the consent form to tshier1@lsu.edu. This study will be conducted in two phases. In the first phase, participants will complete an online survey detailing their personal background and pertinent demographic information. In the second phase, participants will complete a 60-minute interview. The researcher will audio-record interviews with a digital voice recorder and personally transcribe each audio file.

Benefits: While there is no compensation or immediate/direct benefit from study participation subjects will add to literature on the living experiences of gender non-conforming students living on campus.

Risks: There are no known physical, psychological risks associated with participating in this research. However, as it with all studies minimal risks can present themselves and primarily

include the possibility of discomfort in recalling past or current experiences that pertain to questions about life as a gender non-conforming student. However, you may elect to not answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable or uneasy. You can still remain a study participant and simply choose to not answer certain questions. All answers will remain confidential.

Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless law requires disclosure.

Signatures:

The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Dennis Landin, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Subject Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Sample Survey

3/4/2017

Gender Beyond Birth

Gender Beyond Birth

The Lived Experiences of Gender Nonconforming College Students at a Predominantly White Institution in the South

* Required

1. Name *

2. Desired Pseudonym *

3. Preferred email address (use for initial contact)

4. Age *

5. Desired Pronouns *

6. Self-Identified Gender *

7. Current Institution *

8. Classification *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ First-Year Student
- ☐ Sophomore (Second Year)
- ☐ Junior (Third Year)
- ☐ Senior (4+ Years)
- ☐ Masters Student
- ☐ PhD Student
- ☐ Other: _____

9. Academic Major (and Minor if applicable) *

10. Self-Reported GPA *

11. Are you Involved with any campus organizations **Mark only one oval.*☐ Yes☐ No**12. If yes to previous question, what organizations are they?**

13. How long(semesters) have you lived on campus(or How long did you live on campus) *

14. Hometown *

15. Employment Status **Mark only one oval.*☐ Part-time On-Campus☐ Part-time Off-Campus☐ Full-time On Campus☐ Full-time Off-Campus☐ Not Employed**16. How many gender non-conforming students would you estimate you have interactions with at your university? ****Mark only one oval.*☐ 0-2☐ 3-4☐ 5-6☐ 7-8☐ 9+

17. Do you have a source of community on-campus? **Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

18. What Campus resources do you use, if any? How often do you use them? *

19. Do you have familial support? **Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

20. Your campus experience has been.. **Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very Good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

21. Would you recommend your campus to other gender non-conforming students? **Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

22. 20. My campus climate/culture is...(select all that apply) **Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Isolating
- ☐ Welcoming
- ☐ Challenging
- ☐ Hostile
- ☐ Innovative
- ☐ Conservative
- ☐ Liberal
- ☐ Progressive
- ☐ Traditional
- ☐ Athletic-Focused
- ☐ Academic-Focused
- ☐ Student-Centered
- ☐ Fraternity/Sorority influenced
- ☐ Diverse
- ☐ Not Diverse
- ☐ Globally-Minded
- ☐ Service-Minded
- ☐ Environmentally-friendly
- ☐ Segregated
- ☐ Inclusive
- ☐ Religious-based
- ☐ Hypersexual
- ☐ Research-Focused
- ☐ Eclectic

VITA

Tiffany Marlene Shierling, from Buford, Georgia, graduated from Florida Atlantic University in 2015 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communications and Criminal Justice with a certificate in Women's Studies. Tiffany participated in residential life as a resident assistant and desk assistant, student conduct as an intern, and university wide as the only undergraduate member of the Student Success Steering Committee. Tiffany enrolled in the Master of Arts program in Higher Education Administration at Louisiana State University where she has sustained a graduate assistant assistantship in Residential Life. She is a candidate to earn her Master's degree in May 2017.